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ABSTRACT

One hundred twenty-five students found to have few areas of skill mastery were selected to form the Fresh Start Minischool (FSMS). The Fresh Start approach was characterized by individualized instruction in four academic areas (Social Studies, English, Mathematics, and Science). Students proceeded at their own pace and acquired skills according to a sequence of learning tasks. Teachers emphasized a no fail philosophy and focused on student self esteem and motivation. Teachers also participated in staff development workshops. Findings of the program's evaluation indicated: (1) students made significant gains in reading and math as a result of the FSMS program; (2) teachers were consistent in their implementation of the program; (3) FSMS students stayed in school; and (4) participants' attitudes toward themselves and the program were positive. Tables of data are included and sample program forms are appended. (Author/MK)

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE FRESH START MINISCHOOL

E. S. E. A. TITLE IV-C

Final Evaluation Report

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January 1980

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

THE FRESH START MINISCHOOL

Final Report

1979

Prepared by
Division of Research and Evaluation

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FRESH START MINI SCHOOL

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SUMMARY

Title

Fresh Start Mini School (FSMS)

Project Director

Patricia Patton

Location

Frank Ballou High School

Target Population

High school students identified as having the fewest areas of basic math and reading skill mastery.

Background

Some students were entering Ballou High School with math and reading deficiencies that made success and staying in school unlikely possibilities. With input from a planning committee composed of the Ballou community, FSMS began providing intensive individualized skill instruction to such "at risk" students.

Description of Project

The Fresh Start approach is characterized by individualized instruction in four core academic areas. Students proceed at their own pace and acquire skills according to sequenced hierarchies of learning tasks. Teachers emphasize a "no fail" philosophy and focus on student self esteem and motivation as two of their primary concerns. Teachers also participate in staff development workshops designed to train them to work effectively with low achieving students.

Evaluation

Student academic achievement and attitudes, and the implementation of the FSMS program will be the focus of the evaluation.

Findings

1. Teachers agree that FSMS is working and that without it many students would not be successful in high school.

2. There is a consistency among teachers with regard to their record keeping methods, development of sequential skill hierarchies, use of high interest low adaptation activities, and their use of the self awareness training that they received.

3. Although not all students met the goal of two years improvement, many of them did make significant academic gains in eight of the nine subtests of the California Test of Basic Skills.

4. Students in the FSMS program made academic improvement at a greater rate than a control group of students who were not in the program.

5. Students in the FSMS program stay in school in significantly greater numbers than do students in the control group.

6. FSMS and control group students had high mean self-esteem scores. The FSMS end-of-the-year mean score was higher than that of the control group but the difference was not statistically significant.

7. Parent response to the FSMS program and staff was positive.

Conclusions

1. Students did make significant gains in math and reading as a result of the FSMS program.

2. Teachers were consistent in their implementation of the FSMS program.

3. FSMS students stay in school.

4. Participants' attitudes toward themselves and the program were positive.

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Introduction

Purpose - The purpose of the FRESH START MINI SCHOOL (FSMS) is to provide skill instruction appropriate to each learner in a special environment planned to maximize the possibilities of success in high school.

Need - The need for this program was based on data indicating severe deficiencies in math and reading scores of students entering Frank Ballou High School from its feeder schools. Since Ballou had no comprehensive program to deal with this problem many students would fail the high school subjects and drop out of school.

History - The needs assessment process included the formation of a planning committee made up of teachers, administrators, parents and students from the Ballou community. During the 1977-78 school year, the planning committee polled the faculty for their interests and attitudes towards the proposed project. The input from the survey was useful in the operational planning for the project which was implemented during 1978-79 school year.

Description of the Project

Target Population - The procedure for selecting students to participate in the project began with a screening of ninth grade students from Ballou's feeder schools. This process included examination of the Prescriptive Math Test and Prescriptive Reading Test (PMT/PRT) scores and recommendations from feeder school Counselors and English and Mathematics teachers (See Appendix A). From the identified group of students with the fewest areas of skills mastery, 125 were randomly selected to form the Fresh Start Mini School, (FSMS) group and 125 to form the control group. The FSMS students were assigned to groups of approximately 25 students per class.

Staffing - The classes are staffed by 7 teachers who had actively shown an interest in the project during the planning stages. Six teachers teach both regular Ballou High School classes as well as FSMS classes. One teacher is assigned full time to the project. A counselor works with the group part time. The project also has a full time director who is responsible for overall planning and management of the minischool program.

Supplementing this staff are two teacher aides who are parents of project students.

Characteristics of the Fresh Start Approach

Core Areas - FSMS curriculum consists of four core areas: social studies (Earth Cultures); Communications (English); Science (Biology), and Mathematics. In the instructional phase, students begin at their own level and then proceed at their own pace according to sequenced hierarchies of learning tasks. Skills acquired in every class are consistently reinforced until the skills are mastered. A no-fail concept emphasizes continuous progress toward completion of objectives. The students work on individual objectives until the criteria for successful attainment have been

met. Continuous assessment allows for measurement of progress toward objectives which teachers record and maintain in individual folders for each student. The system is explained to students and to their parents (See Appendix B).

Self-Esteem - Student motivation is encouraged through high-interest/low adaptation activities such as computer math and instructional games. These help to foster self-esteem. Teachers are trained in Transactional Analysis techniques to help them to understand the unique problems of this population. The assumption is that when the teachers can relate well to the students, the students feel better about themselves.

Additional experiences to help students develop more positive attitudes about themselves and toward school are a planned part of the FSMS program (See Appendix C). Students have had the opportunity to be involved in outside sctivities such as participating in the Living Stage Program at the Arena Stage, planning a dance, and being on a bowling team.

Also available for the purpose of positive attitude development are counseling support services for both students and parents, provided by the counselor and the project director.

Staff Development - Students were not the only participants new to the program. Teachers needed to learn how to work with this type of student. They received training in such areas as Transactional Analysis, diagnosis and correction of reading and mathematics disabilities, and curriculum development for the underachiever.

Staff development began with summer workshops and continued with regularly scheduled meetings throughout the school year (See Appendix D).

Stated Objectives

A. Given specific skills instruction in the FSMS integrated curriculum, the students in the experimental group will improve their reading and mathematics skills by an average of two years, as measured by the comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, and will exhibit a significantly greater gain than students in the control group.

B. Given intensive counseling and family support services, the students in the experimental group will attend school more regularly and will develop more positive attitudes toward school and toward themselves, as measured by attendance records and by a Likert-like attitudinal scale administered in September and May.

C. Given instruction in specific behavioral approaches, the parents of FSMS students will develop parent effectiveness skills and tutoring techniques needed to support their youngsters while they work to correct learning dificiencies, as measured by a pre- and post- questionnaire based upon the content of the instruction, and by a log kept by the parents.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION DESIGN

The external evaluation is designed to measure the objectives to determine the degree to which they were met, to determine the success/effectiveness of the project, and to examine certain aspects pertaining to exportability. The following evaluation activities were carried out:

Process Evaluation

1. An examination of results of personal interviews with teachers to determine the consistency of application of the FSMS program across classrooms

Objective A - Reading and Mathematics Skills

1. An analysis of pre- and post-test scores on nine sub-tests of the CTBS to determine if a two-year growth was achieved

2. An analysis of pre- and post-test scores on nine sub-tests of the CTBS to determine the percent of increase or decrease in students' actual mean gain over their expected mean gain

3. A comparison of pre- and post-test scores on the CTBS, of the FSMS students and the control group students on whom data was available, to demonstrate the difference in pre-post gain scores - no statistical analysis was to be computed because of the size and skewness of the control group scores

Objective B - Attendance and Attitudes

1. A comparison of attendance data of the FSMS and control groups to see if there was a significant difference in the dropout rate - the test to be used was the significance of the difference between two proportions with differences accepted as significant if Z reached the .05 level

2. An analysis of the results of the Self-Esteem Inventory to determine if there was a significant difference between a random sampling of FSMS and control group students - the test to be used was a t-test on independent samples with differences accepted as significant if t reached the .05 level

Objective C - Parent Involvement

1. Objective C was not measurable as stated because parents were not given instruction in specific behavioral approaches. However, results of a post-experimental questionnaire were analyzed to determine how parents felt about the program and staff.

Exportability

Items discussed were those of particular relevance to this project: Target Population; Community and Home Involvement; and Personnel Training and Technical Assistance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Process Evaluation

The teacher component is a major contributing factor to the success/effectiveness of a project. Interviews were held in May, 1979, with six of the seven teachers (86%), the purpose being to determine the consistency of application of the FSMS program across classrooms. Each question represented a characteristic of the FSMS approach considered necessary to its functioning. It was felt that a good indication of the extent to which each individual teacher was following the FSMS approach would be gained through a personal conversation with project teachers (See Appendix E).

In preparing the questionnaire, the evaluators took into consideration statements from the proposal as follows:

OBJECTIVE A - "Given specific skills instruction in the FSMS integrated curriculum, the students in the experimental group will improve their reading and mathematics skills by an average of two years, as measured by the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, and will exhibit a significantly greater gain than students in the control group."

From Summary - "Fresh Start Minischool students will be given specific skills instruction during a flexible five period time block, utilizing a core of four academic subjects. The same skills will be reinforced in every class within the core during the same time frame until the skills are mastered."

"The FSMS ... is being established to build sequential skills."

From Needs - "They need a high interest, low level adaption of the skills learned in elementary school. They also need the chance to learn high school content while simultaneously mastering basic skills. A core curriculum ... stressing basic skills as well as content would allow students to succeed in H.S."

Form Work Plan - "An important aspect of this work plan is the development of curriculum by teachers. Minischool teachers will be assisted in this effort by the Region One Office of Instruction."

"Another instructional strategy will be practical experimental learning. Given an opportunity to go on field trips and to work on special projects based on individual interests, the students will utilize 'hands on' practical techniques for mastering skills."

"All skills to be taught will be based on need and will be tied in to CBC objectives."

OBJECTIVE B - "Given intensive counseling and family support services, the students in the experimental group will attend school more regularly and will develop more positive attitudes toward school and toward themselves, as measured by attendance records and by a Likert-like attitudinal scale administered in September and May."

From Summary - "Group dynamics and self-awareness training will be given to students to improve their self-esteem ---" (This was modified to the teachers being given the formal training and they were to train the students.)

From Needs - "Repeated success leads to improved self-concept." (This is part of the no-fail concept.)

From Work Plan - "The teachers will assist in the emergence of positive attitudes in students through the use of their own training in self-awareness and group dynamics."

Teacher Questionnaire Results - Following is a summary of the teachers' responses to each of the questions.

1. How do you see the Fresh Start Minischool Program as being different from your regular program?

In response to the first question most teachers cited some aspect of individualized instruction as the factor which made FSMS different from the regular school program. The extent to which activities were more concentrated, tailored to meet individual student needs, and were conducted at the student's own pace indicated to most teachers the more intensive role of individualized instruction in the FSMS. The grading system and the effort by FSMS to obtain student test scores for teachers' planning were also mentioned as factors that set FSMS apart from the regular program.

2a. Are the records you keep on the Fresh Start Minischool students different from those you keep on regular students?

b. How?

The most often mentioned difference in record keeping between the regular program and the FSMS was FSMS use of individual folders. This folder contained stated objectives, pre-and post-tests of formal and informal assessments, and a record of specific skills mastered and specific skills in the process of being mastered. Teachers stated that this method allowed students to check on their own day-to-day progress and to discern their own strengths and weaknesses. The folders sometimes took on a case study appearance including records of dialogues and conferences with students.

3a. Do you coordinate with the other teachers to reinforce the same skills they are reinforcing (in the Fresh Start Minischool students)?

b. Example?

Collaboration between math and science teachers on a metric system unit was the form of coordination reported with the greatest frequency. The combination of the theory (math) and the practical (science) was cited as the reason for the natural connection. A library skills unit including study and note-taking skills was also mentioned as an example of teachers coordinating their efforts. A social studies and history collaboration was mentioned but not elaborated upon. Four of the six teachers interviewed felt that there was not as much coordination between teachers as there should be. The lack of necessary planning time was cited as the reason for this.

4a. Have you had any help in developing curriculum for these students?

b. Can you give an example of a high -interest, low level curriculum adaption you have found useful?

Help in developing curriculum came from two sources. Teachers reported workshops on learning centers, phonics, and CBC as being of assistance in developing curriculum materials. Two teachers mentioned the importance of an awareness of the underachiever when developing materials that are mature and sophisticated enough to be of value. The Project Director was also cited as a source for curriculum assistance. Some examples of high-interest activities listed were metric manipulation (weighing and measuring), games with sight vocabulary, a hydroponic plant project in biology, "hands on" approach to fractions through manipulative materials, and various computer activities.

5. What tie-in do you see between your teaching of these students and the CBC objectives?

Most teachers felt that CBC and FSMS were closely linked in gearing instructional programs to the level of the individual student. Writing objectives according to the basic objective-activities-assessment triad was mentioned as being the tie-in between FSMS and CBC. Three teachers made references to the techniques necessary for implementing CBC objectives. They felt that the underachiever required special consideration with regard to implementation of objectives and development of non-threatening assessment tools.

6a. How do you determine that mastery of skills has taken place?

b. Can you give an example of sequential skills you have taught to the mastery level?

Most teachers made a determination of skill mastery through the use of multiple assessments. Using teacher-made tests, pre- and post-tests, and different modes of skill demonstration (oral report, written report, performance in a game) teachers stated that they were able

to determine skill mastery. Almost all the teachers emphasized the necessity of using a wide variety of modes of skill mastery to make an accurate assessment. For example, biology bingo, the proper use of a microscope, oral recitation, and current events reports were all mentioned as the means by which teachers determine students' mastery. Examples of sequential skills taught to mastery include:

--- a good geo-political understanding of a continent arrived at by a progression from continent features to countries to key cities to cultural, economic, religious, and political institutions.

--- cell understanding in science from defining a cell to observing cells in plants and animals, to labeling 3 parts of the cell to cell theory.

7. Have your Fresh Start Minischool students had an opportunity to go on field trips with you or to work on special projects based on individual interests?

Teachers listed field trip sites ranging from the school grounds to tours of the White House, Air and Space Museum, Museum of History and Technology, Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, and Arena Stage. Special projects included an after school unit on contraceptives, a Red Cross Heart Association seminar, hydroponic plant/ecology project, computer activities, a charm group open to all FSMS girls, and research and reports focusing on Black History Month.

8. How do you handle the "no-fail" concept?

Interpretations of the "no fail" concept varied among both teachers and students. One teacher initially felt that it was unrealistic, for failure was a part of life. Later he realized that FSMS takes away the stigma of failing and he encouraged his students to "learn from their mistakes". Another teacher stressed that time is valuable in order to spur the students on to another level of mastery. Teachers caution that students do not understand no-fail completely. Teachers report that the students feel inferior or "selected out" of the regular classes. Some students do not understand that they may have to repeat work in the coming year even if they don't fail. One teacher reported that students tended to translate Mastery Level to A's and In Progress to F's. If essential understanding of the No-fail concept is established, teachers are generally positive about the system.

9a. What is the main thing you feel you learned from the "Group Dynamics and Self-Awareness" training?

b. Can you give an example of your use of this training with the Fresh Start Minischool students?

Most of the responses to this question show a very personal involvement with teaching. The actual quotes seem to convey most vividly the depth of thought of each teacher.

> "I learned the limits of my own tolerance. I identify with the students in a much more sincere and honest way ..."

"As a person you find out there are other people out there like you. You're not a voice crying out in the wilderness by yourself. There might be someone just down the hall who had the same problem and can help. How I feel and what I'm doing has a lot to do with how I relate to others... "

"You use it every day. If a student has been out for a week, Mrs. Patton says be nice; give them what they missed. It's hard. You try to teach responding to what the student missed. You try to keep cool and dig out what they missed."

10. Would you like to add anything that might help us in our evaluation of this program?

Comments fell into two general categories - needs and strengths. Several teachers felt the need for more time, materials and personnel. Strengths concerning the value to the staff were in learning ways that will be helpful in working with all kinds of students - not just those in the FSMS program. Strengths concerning the value to students were in statements such as, "The Fresh Start Minischool is working. Most of the students wouldn't make it without the FSMS."

The in-depth interviews with teachers suggest that the processes that can lead to the success/effectiveness of the program are being carried out.

Product Evaluation - The product evaluations are reported in the three areas relating to the objectives: - (1.) summative data on skills improvement; (2.) student attitude and attendance data; and (3.) parent involvement data.

Objective A, Skills Improvement - This objective was to be measured in two ways: (1.) a comparison of pre- and post-testing in reading and mathematics to see if students gained two years growth in one year; and (2.) a comparison with the control group to see if FSMS students made a significant gain over control group students.

Pre- and Post-Testing in Reading and Mathematics - The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) was administered in September and in May 1979. The CTBS, first published in 1968, has sub-tests in reading, arithmetic, language, and study skills with subtests within those areas. Buros 7th and 8th Mental Measurements Yearbooks generally give it good reviews. The nine subtests administered were Reading Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, Spelling, Language Mechanics, Language Expression, Math Computation, Math Concepts, Math Application and Reference Skills.

Objective A states that students will improve their skills by an average of two years. As may be seen in Table I, this occurred in one area, math application.

TABLE I

Pre/Post Gain in Skills
Measured by the CTBS

Name of Subtest	Mean Pre-Test Grade Equivalent	Mean Post-Test Grade Equivalent	Pre/Post Gain
Reading Vocabulary	5.03	5.11	+ .08
Reading Comprehension	4.88	5.70	+ .82
Spelling	4.93	5.85	+ .92
Language Mechanics	3.75	5.43	+1.68
Language Expression	4.32	5.66	+1.34
Math Computation	5.27	6.68	+1.41
Math Concepts	4.40	5.49	+1.09
Math Application	3.64	6.07	+2.43
Reference Skills	5.46	6.68	+1.22

An examination of Table I shows that, although the students did not generally reach the objective of a two year gain in one year, they did considerably better than they had in previous years. The post-tests show over a year's gain in 2/3 of the subtests. Using the pre-test score as an indication of previous gain, the average is about a half year for each year in school. Average achievement was determined by dividing the mean pre-test by the mean number of years in school. This constituted an operational definition of the "Expected Gain" shown in Table II.

Table II also shows the percent of increase or decrease over the previous mean gain in each of the subtests. The percent was determined by subtracting the previous mean gain from the actual mean gain and dividing by the previous mean gain.

TABLE II

Percent of Increase or Decrease
Over Previous Mean Gain

Name of Subtest	Expected Mean Gain/Year	Actual Mean Gain/Year	Precent Increase or Decrease Over Previous Mean Gain
Reading Vocabulary	.56	.08	-86%
Reading Comprehension	.54	.82	+52%
Spelling	.55	.92	+67%
Language Mechanics	.42	1.68	+300%
Language Expression	.48	1.34	+179%
Math Computation	.59	1.41	+139%
Math Concepts	.49	1.09	+122%
Math Application	.40	2.43	+508%
Reference Skills	.61	1.22	+100%

The above table shows that the FSMS students have made a significant gain in all areas except Reading Vocabulary.

The results reported in Tables I and II above must be interpreted with caution for three reasons:

1. Whenever working with scores at the extremes of the normal curve, the regression factor must be taken into consideration. Scores on retests tend toward the mean of the normal curve. Since pre-test scores are considerably below average, the regression factor could account for some of the increase.

2. Scores were only reported in grade equivalents. In order to analyze data statistically, it is preferable to have raw scores. The reported scores were changed to months before averaging, but there still is room for error in working with grade equivalent scores

3. A pre-test/post-test design can have many internal and external sources of invalidity.

One way to control for many of the sources of invalidity is to have a randomly selected control group who are given the same pre- and post-tests but not the treatment. Such was done in this study.

Improvement of skills of the FSMS group was also compared to that of the control group. Many of the control group students were unavailable for testing either because of absenteeism or because they officially dropped out of school. (See following section on attendance). Those who were available for testing tended to be those at the higher end of the group, in terms of achievement.

The control group was originally selected randomly (by lot) from a pool of students with low areas of skill mastery from Ballou's feeder schools. (See "Target Population" in the "Background" section of this report.) Because of the random selection, and a large sample, it can be assumed that the groups were originally equal. However, there were only eleven control group students who completed usable pre- and post-tests. There were 61 usable scores in the experimental group. The eleven control group students could no longer be considered as a random sample from the same population and therefore a t-test or an analysis of covariance would not be appropriate. It was felt, however, that a comparison of mean gain scores might show some trends even though the control group's pre-scores were considerably higher than the experimental. (See Table III)

TABLE III

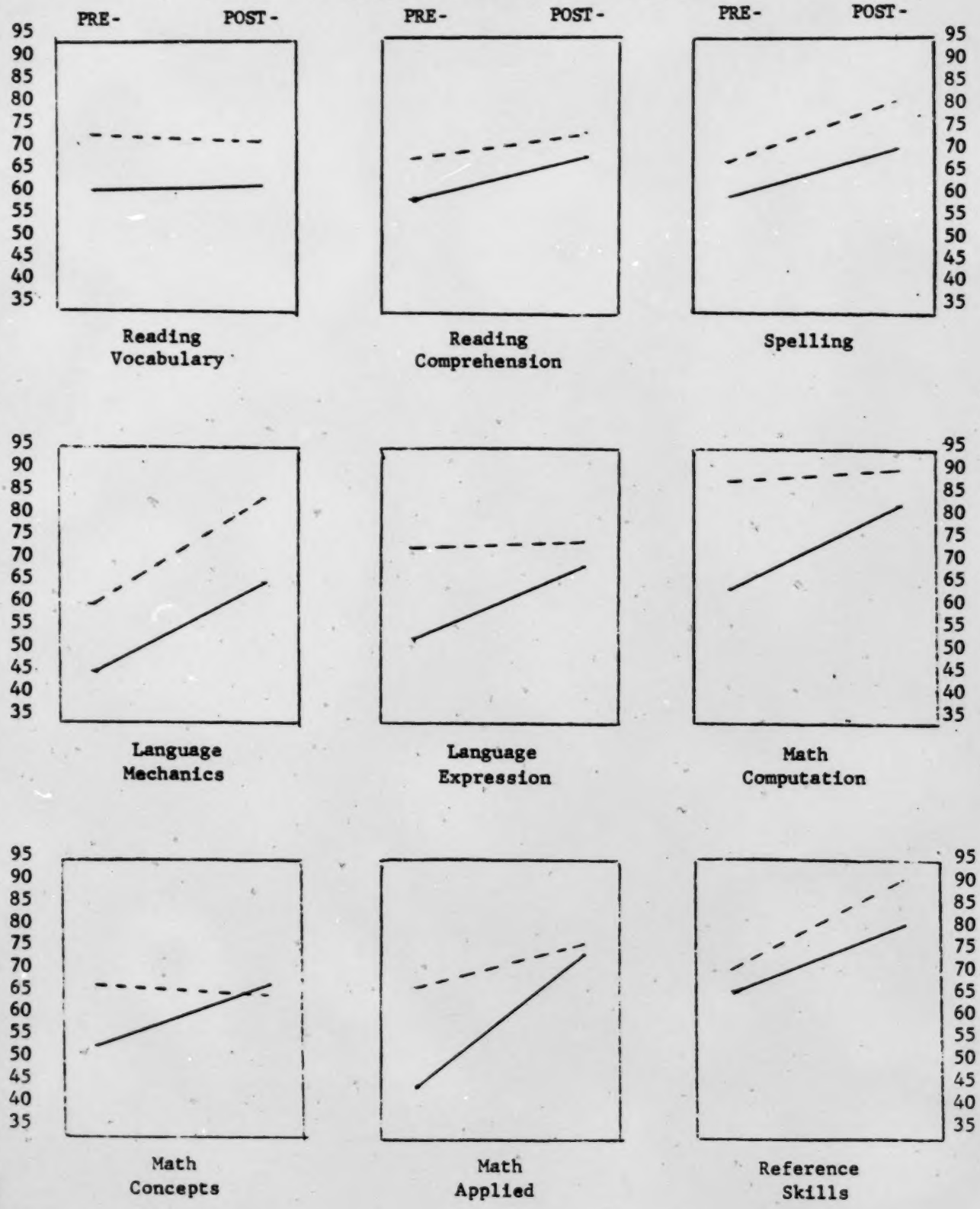
Pre-Post Gains Made By Experimental and Control Groups (Grade Equivalents in Months)

	FSMS Students			Control Group		
Name of Subtest	Mean Pre-Test Score	Mean Post-Test Score	Mean Gain Score	Mean Pre-Test Score	Mean Post-Test Score	Mean Gain Score
Reading Vocabulary	60.00	60.90	.90	70.91	70.46	-.46
Reading Comprehension	58.31	67.75	9.44	67.46	73.27	5.82
Spelling	59.10	69.90	10.80	65.91	80.27	14.36
Language Mechanics	44.64	64.72	20.08	59.27	83.73	24.46
Language Expression	51.20	67.38	16.18	71.18	73.64	2.46
Math Computation	62.92	80.77	17.85	86.00	89.18	3.18
Math Concepts	51.95	65.33	13.38	65.27	64.00	-1.27
Math Applied	43.41	72.71	29.30	65.36	74.82	9.46
Reference Skills	64.89	79.59	14.71	69.46	89.91	20.46

The difference between mean gain scores of experimental and control can be demonstrated graphically by comparing the slant of the two pre-post lines. (See Table IV)

TABLE IV

Graphic Comparison of Pre-Post Mean Gain Scores of Experimental and Control Groups (Grade Equivalents in Months)



As may be seen in Table IV the greatest difference between the slants of the pre-post lines is in language expression and in all of the math areas. In those areas, the Fresh Start Mini School students' scores increased at a much greater pace than those of the control group.

The results of the analysis of the data show that the Fresh Start Mini School project has had a positive effect on the academic progress of the students assigned to the program.

Objective B, Attendance and Attitudes

This objective was measured in two ways: (1) a comparison of the dropout rate of FSMS students and control group students; and (2) a comparison of a random sampling of FSMS and control students on an attitude scale.

Attendance Results - Of the 125 students in the Fresh Start Minischool program, 17 (14%) had officially dropped out of school by May, 1979. Of the 125 students in the control group 31 (25%) had officially dropped out of school by May, 1979. The dropout rate for the control group may have been higher but many students had not notified the school of their intention whereas the record keeping on the FSMS group was much tighter. Using a test for the significance of the difference between two proportions, the difference in the official dropout rate between the two groups is significant at the .01 level. (See Table V.)

TABLE V

Dropout Rate of Students in the Fresh Start Mini School Program and in the Control Group*

FSMS			Control		
Total Starting	Number Dropped Out	Percent Dropout	Total Starting	Number Dropped Out	Percent Dropout
125	17	14%	125	31	25%

* Z = 2.90, significant at .01

These results show that as far as attendance is concerned the FSMS program does make a difference in keeping students in school.

Attitudes - The instrument used to measure attitudes was the Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI). (See Appendix F).

The SEI is not reviewed in Buros Mental Measurements Yearbook. For validity and reliability purposes it was originally administered to 162 students in ten classrooms in different high schools, a rather small sample. Reliability, validity and scoring norms are described in ESAA report no. 6-73/74, printed in January, 1974 in Dallas, Texas. It was authored by Robert P. Grobe, Ph.D., who was coordinator of the ESAA evaluation. In the report, Dr. Grobe includes the following executive summary:

The Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) was designed to provide a general assessment of "self-esteem" for students with limited reading skills. The inventory contains fifteen items and can be administered in approximately ten minutes.

SEI has been used with poor to nonreading high school students. There were no significant differences between the self-esteem level of males and females. Futhermore, no significant differences were found between ethnic groups.

Reliability and validity checks were made on the SEI. In terms of reliability, the alpha coefficient was 0.69. The validity was checked by comparing teacher assessment of a student's self-esteem with the student's score on the SEI. This analysis indicated some agreement between teacher assessment and student scores on the SEI. Reliability and validity measures in this study suggest that the SEI is acceptable for group assessment; however, it should be used very cautiously for individual diagnosis.

The instrument does have the advantage of containing items that are short, easy to read, and with few response choices. These factors influenced its selection since the students in the sample in the District of Columbia School on which it was to be used, have limited language skills.

Self-Esteem - The SEI was administered to a random sampling of 27 FSMS students and 29 control group students. The mean FSMS score was 35.70 while the mean control group score was 34.34. The mean score for all subjects in the standardization sample was 34.1, demonstrating that Ballou students have at least as good a self-esteem as the group on which the SEI was standardized, and in the case of the FSMS, perhaps better. However, the difference between the FSMS and the control group is not significantly different at the .05 level using a t-test for the difference between two independent means. (See Table VI.)

TABLE VI

Self-Esteem Inventory Results*

FSMS		Control		Standardization Sample	
Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
35.70	3.88	34.34	3.73	34.1	4.05

* FSMS/Control t = 1.23, not significant at .05.

Although the difference between the two groups is statistically insignificant, it must be remembered that a larger proportion of control group students have dropped out of school. As was seen by the achievement test data, the control group students remaining in school tended to be the more able students. If self- esteem is enhanced by success, one would expect these more able students to maintain a higher self-esteem.

In the above table, the control group mean is more similar to the standardization sample than it is to the FSMS group. Although the FSMS group mean is higher, the FSMS and control group difference is not significant at the .05 level.

Objective C, Parent Involvement - This objective assumed that parents would attend a series of training sessions to learn parent effectiveness skills and tutoring techniques. Although some meetings were held, an adequate pre- and post- measuring instrument was not developed. In May, however, 25 parents attended a meeting at which time 21 of them responded to an internal questionnaire concerning their feelings about the program. (See Appendix G). The results of the questionnaire are summarized in Table VII.

TABLE VII

Results of FSMS Parent Survey

	Responses									
	Yes		So-So		Not Really		No		Total	
Question	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. I have a good feeling about having my child in Fresh Start	17	81%	3	14%	1	5%	0	0	21	100%
2. The Fresh Start staff is concerned about my child's skills.	20	95%	1	5%	0	0	0	0	21	100%
3. The Fresh Start staff tries to keep in contact with parents.	19	95%	1	5%	0	0	0	0	20	100%
4. Fresh Start is a helpful program	19	90%	2	10%	0	0	0	0	21	100%

Although Objective C was not met as stated in the proposal, the results of the survey show that parents fee' good about the program and the staff

Exportability - In their manual, SHARING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS, A Handbook for Validation of Educational Practices, (1976), The United States Office of Education considers a validated practice exportable if, "(1) it is feasible to transport it to other school districts and (2) it can be adopted or adapted by other school districts with similar needs and environments," (p. 46). In addition to the success/effectiveness of the project, exportability is judged on the basis of the following 13 criteria.

1. Learner Needs
2. Continuation of Learner Elements with State or Local Funds
3. Willingness to Serve as a Demonstration Site if Funded for Dissemination
4. Target Population
5. Learner Involvement
6. Institutional Variables
7. Community and Home Variables
8. Activities Critical to Success
9. Essential Materials (Software)
10. Essential Equipment (Hardware) or Unique Facilities
11. Personnel
12. Personnel Training
13. Special Problems

All 13 items listed under exportability are applicable in the project. However, the items felt to be the most important in this project were: Description of the Target Population; Community and Home Involvement, and Personnel Training and Technical Assistance.

Description of Target Population - Since the FSMS program has been specifically designed for very low achieving students, other school districts adopting the program would have to give careful consideration to the academic characteristics of their population in order to determine the suitablilty of FSMS to their needs. Similarities of grade level and percentile rankings as well as motivational and self-esteem variables would be necessary in order for the program to function as it was intended.

Community and Home Involvement - FSMS began with community input through a planning committee. In this way the program was, in part, the product of the people who would be using its services. Exportability of FSMS would depend greatly upon the degree to which the planning of such a project reflected the demographic characteristics of any given community. This includes involvement of the community during planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of the project.

Personnel Training and Technical Assistance - Staff development workshops focusing on individualizing instruction and self awareness played an important part in the effectiveness of FSMS. Teachers cited their participation in such workshops as being very helpful to them as they attempted to plan for and understand the low achieving student. Propective adopters of the FSMS approach should give consideration to an ongoing training program for staff members.

Findings

1. Teachers agree that FSMS is working and that without it many students would not be successful in high school.

2. There is a consistency among teachers with regard to their record keeping methods, development of sequential skill hierarchies, use of high interest low adaptation activities, and their use of the self awareness training that they received.

3. Although not all students met the goal of two years improvement, many of them did make significant academic gains in eight of the nine subtests of the California Test of Basic Skills.

4. Students in the FSMS program made academic improvement at a greater rate than a control group of students who were not in the program.

5. Students in the FSMS program stay in school in significantly greater numbers than do students in the control group.

6. FSMS and control group students had high mean self-esteem scores. The FSMS end-of-the-year mean score was higher than that of the control group but the difference was not statistically significant.

7. Parent responses to the FSMS program and staff was positive.

CONCLUSIONS

1. STUDENTS DID MAKE SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN MATH AND READING AS A RESULT OF THE FSMS PROGRAM. Though not the two year gain that orginally, perhaps, was overly ambitious, students did show significant improvement over both their previous rate of achievement and over the rate of improvement of the control group.

2. TEACHERS WERE CONSISTENT IN THEIR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FSMS PROGRAM. Areas identified as being necessary to the success of the program were applied and emphasized in a reasonably uniform manner.

3. FSMS STUDENTS STAY IN SCHOOL. There were significantly fewer drop-outs from the FSMS program than from the control group.

4. PARTICIPANTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEMSELVES AND THE PROGRAM WERE POSITIVE. At the end of the school year, students showed good self-esteem. Teachers displayed a deeper understanding of themselves and their students. Teachers also emphasized their support for the FSMS program which they said was crucial for many low achieving students. Parents polled have good feelings about having their child in the FSMS program.

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. EVALUATION OF THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT STUDENTS PREVIOUS RATE OF ACHIEVEMENT. Measuring students achievement against their own previous rate of achievement rather than against a fixed rate such as two years growth per year, is a more meaningful indicator of the success of an intervention technique.

2. BECAUSE OF THE HIGH ATTRITION RATE OF THE CONTROL GROUP, THEY MAY NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED A RANDOM EQUIVALENT SAMPLE. With the changed characteristics of the control group, caution must be used in future comparisons of FSMS students to this group except for drop-out data.

3. AN ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT MORE SENSITIVE TO THE FSMS OBJECTIVES THAN THE ONE PRESENTLY USED, SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED. High experimental and control group scores of students point toward the need for a more sensitive measure.

4. A DETERMINATION SHOULD BE MADE AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE OBJECTIVE C (CONCERNING PARENT TRAINING) SHOULD BE MEASURED AS STATED. If parents will be trained to learn parent effectiveness skills and tutoring techniques, an appropriate instrument should be developed to measure the effectiveness of the training. If formal training of the parents is not the goal, than the objective should be revised and appropriate evaluation measurements identified.

APPENDIX A

Recommendation Forms from School Counselors, and English and Mathematics Teachers from Ballou's Feeder Junior High Schools

April, 1978

Teacher's Name _____

Position ___English Teacher

(Check One) ___Mathematics Teacher

Name of Fresh Start Minischool Candidate:

_____

Reasons recommended:

_____ Poor vocabulary

_____ Poor comprehension skills

_____ Poor writing skills

_____ Lack of basic computational skills

_____ History of failure in junior high school (or passing with D's)

_____ High absenteeism

_____ Other (Please explain) _____

_____

_____

Name of junior high school: _____

APPENDIX B

Letter Sent to Parents Explaining
The No-Fail System

November 1978

Dear Parents,

Enclosed with this letter is the first advisory report of your child's progress in the Fresh Start Minischool.

You will notice that our grading system is different from the one currently being used in other school programs. We have listed each skill that your child needs to learn. If the student has learned a skill well enough to score 80 to 89% on the posttest, a rating of "S" for satisfactory will be given. If your child gets a score of 90 to 100% on the posttest, a rating of "M" for mastery will be given. Both ratings, "S" and "M", represent completion of an objective.

Fresh Start is a school without failure. Each student is allowed to move at his or her own pace. We shall work with each student until he or she masters a particular skill. If the skill has not been mastered at the end of an advisory, the student will receive a rating of "IP" or in progress. This means that the student is still working toward mastery of the skill.

Students must complete at least 70% of the objectives for each of the Fresh Start classes in order to receive a passing grade for each class.

Region One has a new promotion policy for 1978-79. This policy states that all students must be competent in certain basic skills before passing to the next grade. Included in our Fresh Start report card is a list of basic skills from the Region One promotion policy for tenth grade students.

Each student should also master 70% of the skills outlined by Region One in order to pass to the eleventh grade.

Given these requirements. some of our students will finish all of their tenth grade course requirements by June 1979. Others may finish next fall or winter. Whenever your child finishes tenth grade, he or she will have a solid background and enough skills to do well in the eleventh and twelfth grades.

For further information, you may call the Fresh Start office at 767-7071 or 767-7225.

Sincerely,

Patricia F. Patton
Director

APPENDIX C

Sample of Experiences Offered to Help Students Improve Their Self Esteem

February 5, 1979

To: All Fresh Start Minischool Students

From: Ms. Patton

Re: Arts and Crafts Activities

Mrs. Carter in A209 has volunteered to sponsor an arts and crafts program for interested students in the Fresh Start Minischool. Below are listed various activities which may be included in the program. If you want to participate, please check the activities in which you are most interested. The most popular choices will be included in the program.

_____ drawing	_____ crocheting
_____ painting	_____ embroidery
_____ weaving	_____ collage
_____ knitting	_____ assemblage
_____ macrame	_____ jewelry-making (no metals)
_____ tie dying	_____ book binding
_____ calligraphy (fancy writing)	_____ batiking

APPENDIX D

Fresh Start Staff Development Activities for 1978-79

Fresh Start Staff Development
Activities for 1978-79

October 12 & 13, 1978	Group Dynamics Workshop
November 8, 1978	Workshop on individualized instruction
December 21, 1978	Staff workship on finalizing terminal and enabling objectives
November 4 - December 23, 1978	Three hour graduate course for teachers, "Recognizing and Correcting Reading Disabilities"
December 12, 1979 & February 12-16, 1979	Phonics workshops for teachers
April 21-May 19, 1979	Graduate course for director, "Effective Interpersonal Communication for Educators"

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions for Fresh Start Minischool Teachers

Interview Questions for Fresh Start Minischool Teachers

1. How do you see the Fresh Start Minischool Program as being different from your regular program?

2a. Are the records you keep on the Fresh Start Minischool students different from those you keep on regular students?

b. How?

3a. Do you coordinate with the other teachers to reinforce the same skills they are reinforcing (in the Fresh Start Minischool students)?

b. Example?

4a. Have you had any help in developing curriculum for these students?

b. Can you give an example of a high -interest, low level curriculum adaption you have found useful?

5. What tie-in do you see between your teaching of these students and the CBC objectives?

6a. How do you determine that mastery of skills has taken place?

b. Can you give an example of sequential skills you have taught to the mastery level?

7. Have your Fresh Start Minischool students had an opportunity to go on field trips with you or to work on special projects based on individual interests?

8. How do you handle the "no-fail" concept?

9a. What is the main thing you feel you learned from the "Group Dynamics and Self-Awareness" training?

b. Can you give an example of your use of this training with the Fresh Start Minischool students?

10. Would you like to add anything that might help us in our evaluation of this program?

APPENDIX F

Self Esteem Inventory

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Division of Research and Evaluation
Title IV - Part C Evaluation Unit

SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY

This questionnaire will only take about five minutes to complete and we will be reading the questions to you. Please do not begin until you have heard the directions, and then wait until each question is read. The questions ask how you would describe yourself. Listen to each question carefully and then blacken the circle to the right of the statement to indicate your answer. Mark only one choice for each question. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers -- what matters is how you feel about things.

		Almost Always	Sometimes	Almost Never
1.	Do you do the best work that you can?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
2.	Do you worry very much about your personal problems?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
3.	Are you usually happy?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
4.	Do you wish you were a different person?...	(1)	(2)	(3)
5.	Do you feel unimportant?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
6.	Do you face up to your responsibilities?...	(1)	(2)	(3)
7.	Do you lose your cool very easily?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
8.	Is it very difficult for you to make decisions?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
9.	Do you wish you looked differently?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
10.	Do you feel there are lots of things you can't do very well?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
11.	Are you able to admit it when you're wrong?	(1)	(2)	(3)
12.	Do you find it very difficult to talk about your feelings?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
13.	Do you keep from trying things because you're afraid you'll fail at them?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
14.	Do you have more than your share of bad breaks?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)
15.	Do you like to be with your friends?.....	(1)	(2)	(3)

APPENDIX G

Parent Survey for the Fresh Start Minischool

PARENT SURVEY
FOR
THE FRESH START MINISCHOOL
MAY 10, 1979

Please circle the answer that tells how you feel.

1. I have a good feeling about having my child in Fresh Start.

Yes! So-So Not really No!

---

2. The Fresh Start Staff is concerned about my child's skills.

Yes! So-So Not really No!

---

3. The Fresh Start staff tries to keep in contact with parents.

Yes! So-So Not really No!

---

4. Fresh Start is a helpful program.

Yes! So-So Not really No!